

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 CA-01 ISO-00 L-03 SCS-06 PPT-01 CU-04
USIA-06 EB-08 SP-02 CIAE-00 FBIE-00 INSE-00
NSAE-00 OC-06 CCO-00 /050 W
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FM AMCONSUL LENINGRAD
TO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 4068

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 LENINGRAD 00686

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: CGEN, ACOU, APOU, UR, US
SUBJECT: USA-USSR CONSULAR TALKS: COURIER PROBLEMS AT
CONGEN LENINGRAD

REF (A) MOSCOW 2638, (B) 77 LENINGRAD 921, (C) 77 STATE
148259, (D) 77 MOSCOW 8601, (E) 77 MOSCOW 8220 (F) 77
MOSCOW 8152, (G) 76 LENINGRAD 1371

1. CONGEN LENINGRAD'S PROBLEMS WITH AIRPORT TRANSFER OF
POUCH AND CONVEYANCE OF UNCLASSIFIED POUCHES TO FINLAND
BY TRAIN REMAIN THE SAME AS THEY WERE LEFT AT ROUND TWO
OF THE CONSULAR TALKS LAST JUNE. AS EMBASSY MAY RECALL,
THE AIRPORT POUCH PROBLEM CONSISTS IN CUMBERSOME PROCEDURE
WHEREBY OUTGOING POUCHES MUST BE TRANSFERRED FROM CONSUL-
ATE VEHICLE TO SOVIET VEHICLE FOR CONVEYANCE TO PLANE-
SIDE WHILE INCOMING POUCHES, FIRST LOADED ONTO SOVIET
VEHICLE AT PLANESIDE MUST IN TURN BE TRANSFERRED TO
CONGEN VEHICLE OUTSIDE THE FLIGHT AREA. THE ENTIRE
PROCEDURE MAKES US HEAVILY DEPENDENT UPON

--SOVIETS' PROVIDING VEHICLE IN TIME TO GET TO PLANE
SO THAT THERE WILL BE NO OFFLOADING OF BAGGAGE BY SOVIET
PERSONNEL NOT SUPERVISED BY AMERICAN PERSONNEL
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--THE GOOD WILL OF GERMAN AND FINNISH CONSULATE PERSONNEL
WHO NOT ONLY MUST WAIT FOR THE MORE TIME-CONSUMING
TRANSFER OF POST'S POUCHES BUT WHO ALSO RENDER YEOMAN
SERVICE IN THIS LABORIOUS TASK, IN ADDITION TO TRANS-
FERRING THEIR WON POUCHES WHICH ARRIVE BY SAME FLIGHT.

2. THE PROBLEM OF TAKING THE MAIL TO FINLAND BY TRAIN INVOLVES THE NECESSITY OF CONVEYING THE BULKY UNCLASSIFIED BAGS IN THE SLEEPING COMPARTMENT WITH CONGEN PERSONNEL RATHER THAN IN THE BAGGAGE CAR AS IS DONE ON THE MOSCOW-HELSINKI MAIL RUN. ON THE RETURN TRIP FROM FINLAND TO LENINGRAD, THE SAME TYPE OF BAGS ARE CARRIED IN THE BAGGAGE CAR.

3. AS EMBASSY MAY RECALL, THE SOVIETS INDICATED A WILLINGNESS LAST YEAR TO DISCUSS THESE PROBLEMS. THEY SPECIFICALLY MENTIONED THAT THEY, TOO, HAVE AIRPORT POUCH TRANSFER PROBLEMS BOTH IN SAN FRANCISCO AND IN NEW YORK, BUT NEITHER EMBASSY NOR DEPARTMENT WAS EVER ABLE TO OBTAIN FROM SOVIETS A STATEMENT OF WHAT THESE PROBLEMS ARE. AS TO THE FINLAND MAIL RUN, SOVIETS CITED 1947 RAILWAY TREATY WITH FINLAND AS DICTATING PRESENT ARRANGEMENT BUT NOTED THAT THE QUESTION COULD BE NEGOTIATED.

4. POST THEREFORE REQUESTS EMBASSY TO SUBMIT NON-PAPER TO SOVIET SIDE ALONG THE FOLLOWING LINES:

THE EMBASSY APPRECIATES THE MINISTRY'S ASSURANCES GIVEN DURING AUGUST 25, 1976 SESSION OF THE US-USSR CONSULAR TALKS THAT THE PROBLEMS OF TRANSFERRING OFFICIAL UNITED STATES DIPLOMATIC BAGGAGE AT LENINGRAD AIRPORT
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AND CONVEYANCE OF OFFICIAL DIPLOMATIC MAIL BY RAILWAY BAGGAGE CAR TO FINLAND WILL BE RESOLVED POSITIVELY. EMBASSY LIKEWISE APPRECIATES MINISTRY'S STATEMENT AT SESSIONS OF JUNE 8 AND JUNE 15, 1977 THAT THESE PROBLEMS CAN BE SETTLED BY NEGOTIATION.

EMBASSY NOTES, HOWEVER, THAT DESPITE INDICATIONS FROM MINISTRY THAT IT WOULD PROVIDE STATEMENT OF SIMILAR PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED BY SOVIET COURIERS AT SAN FRANCISCO AIRPORT, SUCH STATEMENT WAS NEVER FORTHCOMING.

IN THE ABSENCE THEREFORE OF SPECIFIC COMPLAINTS FROM THE SOVIET SIDE ABOUT SIMILAR DIPLOMATIC BAGGAGE PROBLEMS, THE EMBASSY WISHES ONCE AGAIN TO RAISE THESE TWO QUESTIONS AND TO REQUEST THEY BE RESOLVED ALONG FOLLOWING LINES:

--CONSULATE GENERAL PERSONNEL IN LENINGRAD TO BE AUTHORIZED TO MEET AIRCRAFT CARRYING AMERICAN COURIERS BY DRIVING OFFICIAL CONSULATE VEHICLE TO THE SIDE OF THE AIRCRAFT AS SOON AS IT PARKS ON THE AIRFIELD FOR THE PURPOSE OF EXCHANGING POUCHES

--DIPLOMATIC MAIL CONVEYED TO FINLAND BY RAILWAY WILL BE CARRIED IN THE BAGGAGE CAR, AT THE DESIRE OF THE COURIER, AS IS DONE WITH ESCORTED MAIL ON THE RETURN TRIP FROM FINLAND TO LENINGRAD AND AS IS DONE IN BOTH DIRECTIONS WITH ESCORTED MAIL CONVEYED BY RAILWAY BETWEEN MOSCOW AND FINLAND.

4. THE ABOVE SUGGESTED LANGUAGE SEEKS TO LIMIT TO SAN FRANCISCO SITUATION ANY CONSIDERATIONS OF RECIPROCITY WHICH THE SOVIETS WILL UNDOUBTEDLY RAISE. IT IS ALSO

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 LENINGRAD 00686

CALCULATED TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF SOVIET DELEGATION CHIEF I.M. GOROKHOV'S STATEMENTS AT MEETINGS LAST JUNE THAT HE WOULD PROVIDE MEMORANDUM ON SOVIET COURIER PROBLEMS AND A COPY OF THE 1947 FINNO-SOVIET AGREEMENT ON DIRECT RAILWAY COMMUNICATIONS AND THAT HE WOULD REFER THE QUESTION OF CONVEYING THE MAIL BAGS TO FINLAND IN RAILWAY BAGGAGE CAR TO THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAY COMMUNICATIONS. THEIR NONCOMPLIANCE WITH AT LEAST THE FIRST TWO PROMISES MIGHT WELL BE EXPLOITED.

5. CONGEN THANKS EMBASSY FOR ITS INVITATION TO BE REPRESENTED AT THE TALKS AND WILL SEND AN OFFICER IF HIS WORKLOAD PERMITS AT THE TIME THAT MEETINGS ARE SCHEDULED. BUCHANAN

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